

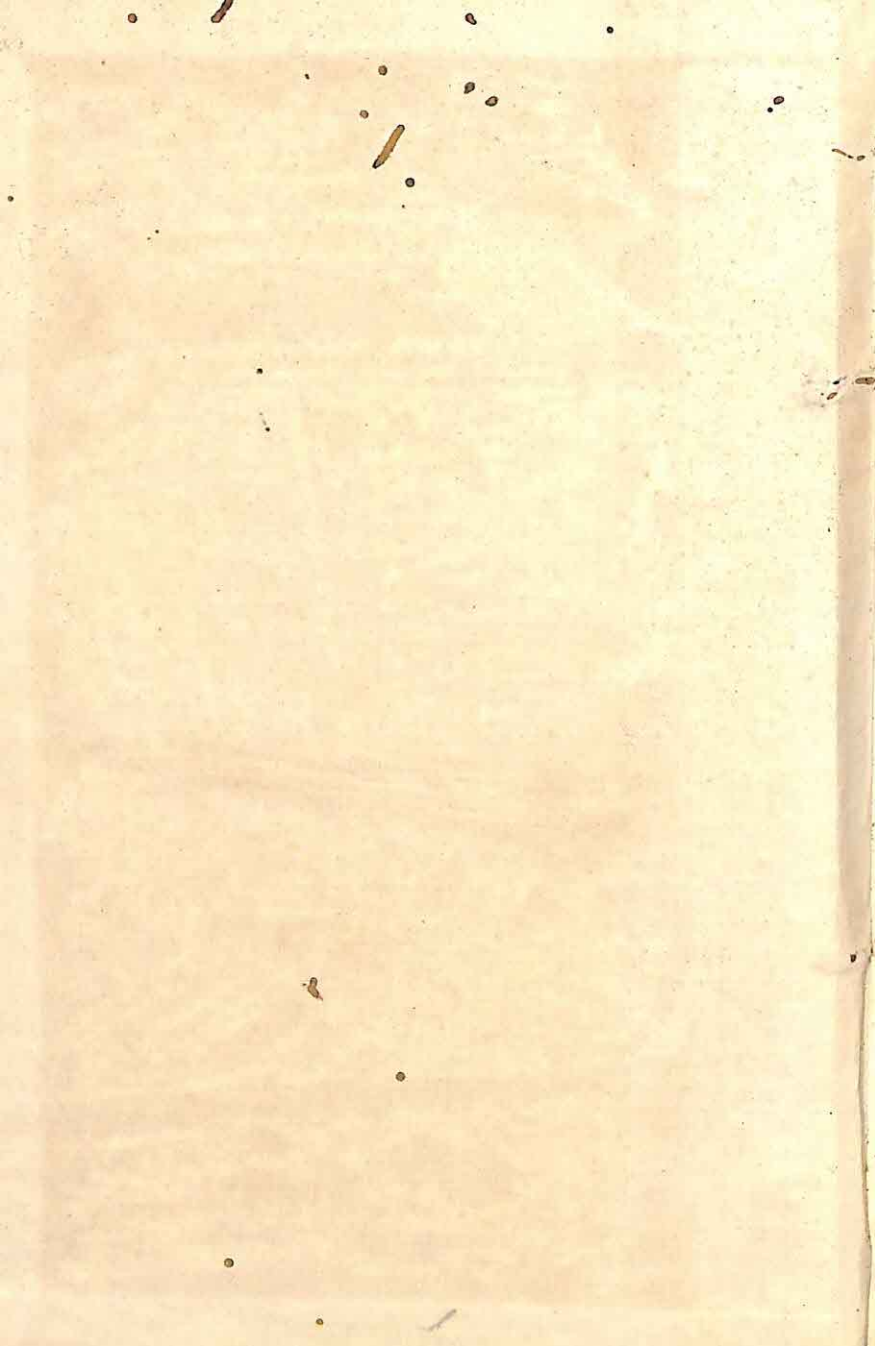
A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR

EDUCATION IN INDIA



DADABHAI NAOROJI MEMORIAL LECTURES

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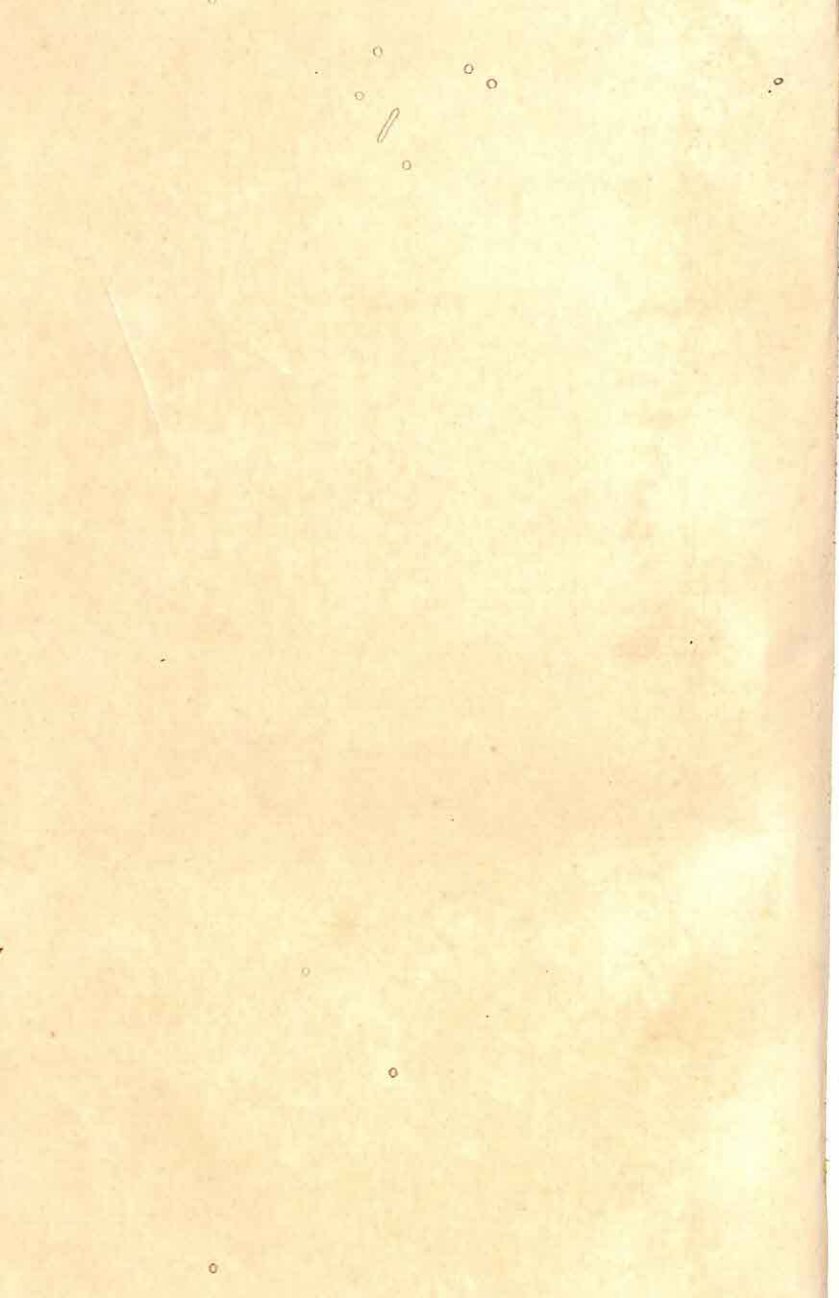


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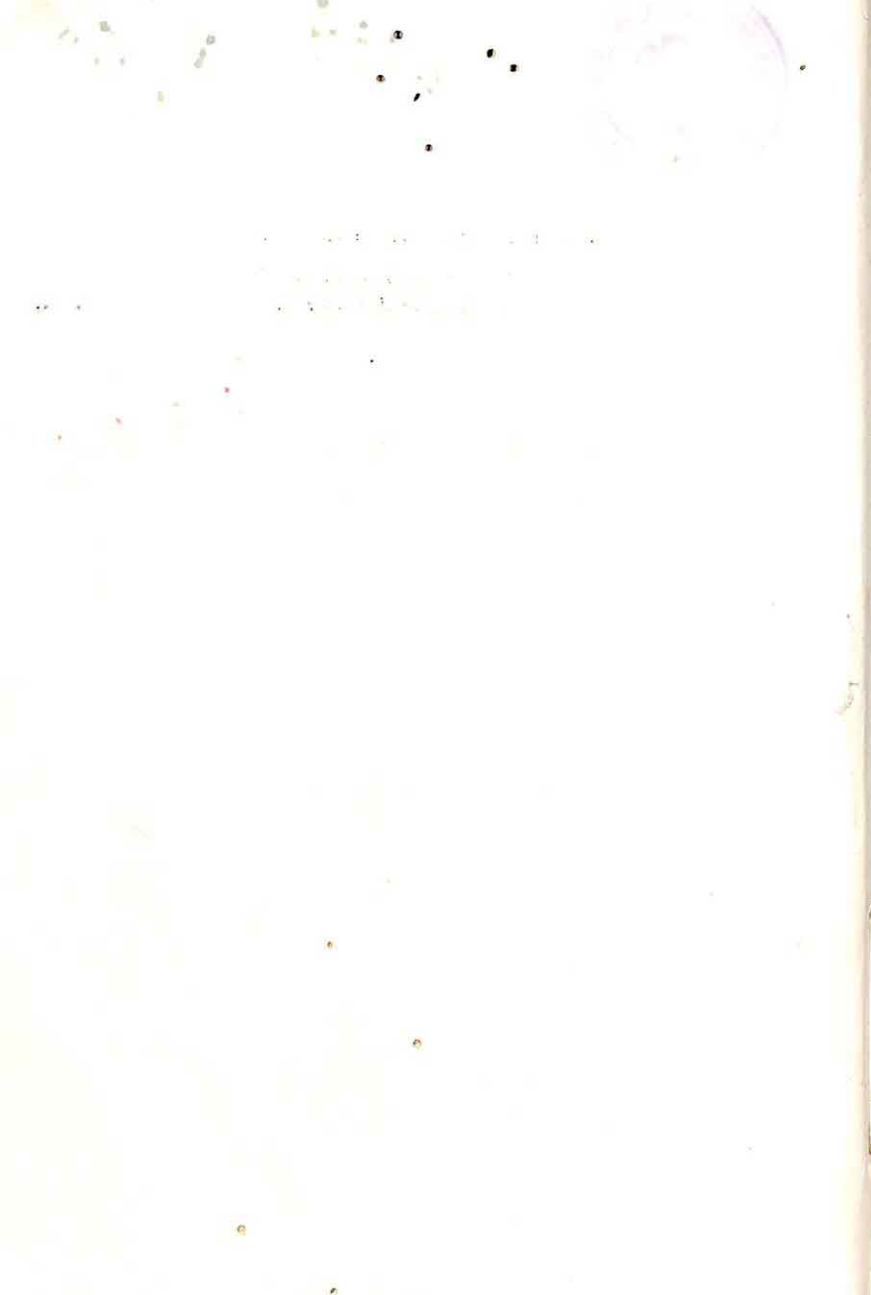
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EDUCATION IN INDIA

*Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial
Prize Fund Lectures*

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Education in India

A. LAKSHMANASWAMI MUDALIAR



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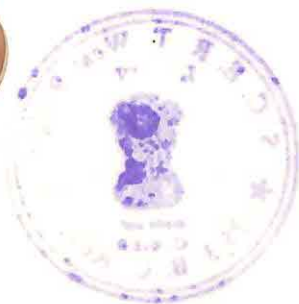
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Arcot Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar (b. 1887)



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PREFACE

THE Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Fellowship Prize for 1960 in the subject of Education was awarded to Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, the distinguished educationist and Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University. He delivered three lectures in the Bombay University Convocation Hall on February 11, 12 and 13, 1960, on "Education in India". They have now been published in book form. The Trustees are grateful to Dr. Mudaliar for accepting their invitation and delivering such interesting and instructive lectures.

They are also grateful to Shri Sri Prakasa, the Governor of Bombay and Chancellor of the University of Bombay, for inaugurating the series of lectures on February 11, 1960.

Bombay

May 25, 1960

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FROM EARLY TIMES UPTO THE 19th CENTURY

I DEEM IT a great privilege that I should have been asked to deliver the third of the memorial lectures which have been instituted in the name of that great son of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. To the present generation perhaps, the name of Dadabhai Naoroji may not mean as much as it did to those of us of an older generation. His contributions in many fields of public activity are too numerous to mention; but, during his whole lifetime, the passion for progress in his own country was such that whatever position he occupied the interests of his country were always foremost. Thrice President of the Indian National Congress, a Member of the British Parliament, one whose advice was eagerly sought after by his countrymen at all times, Dadabhai Naoroji lived to the ripe old age of 91 and has left to his grateful countrymen a record and a career which might well be an example and an inspiration for the younger generation.

His interest in matters pertaining to education and more particularly to the education of girls and women of India was profound. On the occasion of his 91st birthday when fitting tributes were paid to him not only from eminent persons and associations all over India but from many in the different parts of the Commonwealth, Dadabhai Naoroji stated in the course of his reply:

"I am glad my good friend, Sir William Wedderburn, and many others are presenting a memorial to Mr. Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, on the subject of the education of girls and women in India. Let India support this movement wholeheartedly and I have great hopes that something substantial will be done to accelerate the progress of female education in India. Let the result of this be what it may—it is we, the people of India, who must do all what we can in this all important matter."

Mr. Naoroji's tender and loyal championship of women and women's education is but one aspect of a life of what the late Mrs. Sarojini Naidu so aptly called "one long and noble consecration to the motherland". It is most appropriate therefore that a life of such exemplary devotion to the cause of the motherland should be remembered by posterity and I deem it most fitting that the Committee should have thought of these memorial lectures which will bring home to the people what they owe to the past

and to the great personalities who have shaped the destiny of this country in a manner that few of us realise fully at present. Dadabhai Naoroji lived in an age of great versatile statesmen of independence and integrity in the company of such persons as Ranade, Phirozshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Dinshaw Edulji Wacha, to speak only of a few in this part of the country.

When I was asked therefore to deliver these lectures, I confess I felt some hesitation, not because of any lack of admiration for this great Indian statesman but due to the diffidence whether I could perform the task with any degree of competence as befits the memorial founded to commemorate such a great personality. Discretion might have been the better part of valour but, having accepted your invitation, I place myself in your hands and crave your indulgence for these few lectures that I have been privileged to deliver.

The subject of my theme is: "The Progress of Education in India through the Ages", a subject in which the great patriot, Dadabhai Naoroji, took such a keen interest. There can be no doubt that the future of any country depends upon the progress of education and that whatever hopes, whatever aspirations, whatever longings we may have, and whatever may be the edifice that we may dream of in the future, these can be realised only if education in the widest sense is made available and availed of by the younger generation. It is

generally believed that the physical resources that are available in a country in such products as coal, iron, manganese, gold and many other varieties of mineral wealth and in the mighty rivers that flow across the land will help in the making of a highly prosperous State. But it is forgotten that there are many countries in the world in the under-developed and undeveloped areas where these great physical resources are left untouched and such States become a prey to exploitation by nations which have had greater educational opportunities and which train their youth in many fields of educational discipline. It therefore requires no apology from me to choose a subject of this nature for these memorable lectures. My object in referring to the progress of education in our country through the ages is to remind ourselves of what is well-known to students of history and ancient culture, that India is a country with a rich tradition of educational progress dating back to eras when many of the so-called modern, developed countries were still passing through the ignorance of the dark ages and when the denizens of some of these countries were still springing from branch to bough. Ancient India had a system of education which can well give us some object lessons in regard to the duties that every section of humanity owes in cultivating the proper atmosphere, standards and methods of education.

I propose in these lectures to deal with education as it was practised in India from the earliest times.

to the beginnings of the British administration, with education during the period of the British administration till the dawn of independence in 1947, and lastly with the progress of education during these 12 years since India attained its independence. During the first period, there were three significant impacts on ancient Indian education, more particularly in the north of India. The earliest of these was the impact of the Aryan civilization when the Aryans entered India many centuries before the Christian era. Their influence spread through the whole of North India, in the beginning for natural causes before it percolated into South India. The second impact was the Buddhistic influence which gradually spread to many parts of India down to the South. And lastly, there was the influence of Moslem culture on the system of education then prevalent in India and the establishment of their own educational institutions.

If we take the first period, the education imparted was generally confined in the beginning to the priestly classes and later it spread to the two other castes, the kshatriyas, i.e., the nobles and the warriors, and the vysias, i.e., the agriculturists and traders, who were of Aryan descent. We get a glimpse here of the manner in which education was imparted, of the relationship between the teacher and the pupil, and the duty of the public in encouraging the teachers and looking after the pupils. It would appear that this period of apprenticeship for the young pupil was a period of hard, untiring

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labour and strict discipline. Pupils had to work for their teacher in the house and the field, attending to his sacred fires, looking after his cattle, collecting alms for him. The pupil also accompanied his teacher and awaited his commands. In the leisure time left from the duties to be performed for the *guru*, the *Veda* was studied. It seems to have been the custom in those days for students sometimes to travel far to study under celebrated teachers. In the early Vedic schools, instruction would appear to have been confined to young brahmins and was regarded mainly as a preparation for their future vocation as priests. But some time before 500 B.C., the education of the young kshatriyas and vysias would appear to have been started.

The period required for proper education would seem to have been long and the process arduous. Thus it is mentioned that

“the length of the course varied according to the particular *Veda* to be studied.”

“And he shall remain a student for 12 years in order to study one *Veda* or, if he studies all the *Vedas*, 12 years for each, or for as long a period as he requires for learning them.”

It would appear therefore that the length of the course for those who wanted to master the four *Vedas* might be 48 years. Naturally it would not have been possible for more than a few students to continue their studies as long as 36 or 48 years. And

thus the bulk of them were conversant with one or other of the *Vedas*.

It was also laid down that the length of the annual term to be spent in study was $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $5\frac{1}{2}$ months, the year beginning with the full moon in the month of Sravana, that is, in July/August. Thus it came about that the teaching was during the rainy and cold seasons and when the heat was less intense.

The pupil was under certain obligations towards the teacher. In the first place, the pupil had to remain with the teacher so long as the course lasted. Certain domestic services had to be performed by him for the teacher and these included fetching water, collecting fuel, and sweeping the place round the fire. Begging for his food was also a duty which the student had to perform. In fact, this system of asking for alms or what may now be regarded as collection of funds by the pupils for existence was in vogue even at the end of the last century when pial school boys had to go round on the occasion of the Dasara festival, singing certain songs and asking for donations for the physical maintenance of their teacher. Even now, in some of the remoter parts, there is a system by which students subsist by means of begging and it was a common practice till a few years ago that the bulk of the poor students lived by a system which was known as '*Wara Bojanam*', that is, a system by which students were fed on each day of the week by a family throughout the period of their student career.

Rigid rules were laid down for the conduct of the

pupil. These included hygienic, moral and religious precepts and the regulation of good manners. It was his duty to bathe daily, to avoid certain types of food, not to sleep in the day time, and to control his temper and regulate his demeanour. The teacher also had an obligation to fulfil his duty towards the pupil. These old time teachers seem to have been like the teachers of the modern era, against harsh punishments. The system of teaching was individual and each pupil was separately instructed by the teacher, though there may have been occasions when the teacher explained something to all pupils at the same time. From the earliest times, the idea was that the teacher should pass on to the pupil the traditions he had himself received and this involved primarily the learning by heart of the sacred books.

But, even from the earliest times, the content of education had begun to widen out. Thus it was that the sciences of geometry and algebra were developed consequent on the elaborate rules for the construction of altars. The desire to find propitious times and seasons for crops and other purposes gave rise to astrology from which astronomy developed. The dissection of sacrificial victims was the beginning of anatomy. The study of grammar must have been taken up from very early times and Panini is still the greatest recognised authority on grammar and syntax. Algebra was also known and it is to India that the West is indebted for its system of numerical notation which came from India through the Arabs and is often wrongly attributed to them.

The science of medicine also was developed in India at an early date. One of the greatest authorities was Charaka who is reported to have been the court physician of a Buddhist king, Kanishka, in the first century of the Christian era. Another great name is that of Susrutha who lived about the 4th or 5th century A.D.

From the most ancient times, there existed in India settlements in connection with which *parishads* or assemblies of learned men were held which gave decisions on all points connected with religion and learning. A *parishad* is said to consist of 21 scholars well versed in philosophy, theology and law. These *parishads* were in certain respects like judicial assemblies and in others like ecclesiastical synods, as those who composed them were most of them also teachers. They correspond to a certain extent to the associations of teachers in the Middle Ages of Europe.

An instance of an early intellectual centre is Takshasila or Taxila, the capital of Gandhara in North-west India, wherefrom Panini, the grammarian, arose and the site is not far from the modern Rawalpindi. Many other centres of learning were established, as for example, Banaras and Nadia which became famous in later times. In the Buddhist system of education, as we shall see later, it was the monastery which was the centre of learning. Monasteries have never had such an important place in Hinduism as in Buddhism but they have existed and are still to be found. Among the most

famous are the monasteries or *matts* founded by the great Vedantist scholar, Sankaracharya, at Sringeri, Badari, Dwaraka and Puri and these institutions are still flourishing.

It would not be correct to say that education during this period was purely of an intellectual type and did not take note of the requirements of the community. The education imparted to kshatriyas and vysias, although it included the study of the *Veda*, to a certain extent also took note of the requirements of these communities to pursue their technical skills. Thus the young kshatriyas in early times not only studied the *Vedas* but also military skill and right moral conduct. The science of politics had grown up and much more attention was given to fitting young kshatriya princes for the duties of their high office. We have a valuable picture of this education in the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya. Thus a vocational training for the sons of noble families among the kshatriyas and for the vysias had already been devised in the ancient systems. It is stated that a vysia must be acquainted with the manner of sowing the seeds and of the good and bad qualities of fields and he must know perfectly all measures and weights, the excellence and defects of commodities, the advantages and disadvantages of different countries, the probable profit and loss on merchandise and the means of properly rearing cattle. Commercial geography, arithmetic and some languages as well as practical details of trade were to be learnt.

Many crafts came into vogue at this time and with them a large number of castes based upon the particular type of avocation—carpenters, tailors, goldsmiths, etc. The technical and professional skill developed in each caste was passed on from generation to generation. It was the villages which were the strongholds of the traditional arts and crafts of India, although many of the craftsmen also lived in the towns.

At the time when this type of education was progressing in North India, an equally vigorous type of education was being given in South India. From very early times, South India exported such articles as pepper, pearls and precious stones which were all highly valued in other lands. This brought wealth to the rulers and the merchants and there is mention in ancient literature about trade which flourished in those times with overseas countries. A high degree of civilization was developed with a remarkable literature and evidence of much artistic skill. The courts of kings patronised literature, music and the drama. The three most important kingdoms of this area were the Chola, the Chera and the Pandya kingdoms. The capital of the Pandyan kingdom was at Madura while further north was the Pallava kingdom in the domains of which was Kanchipuram. The early Tamil poems, probably in praise of gods and kings, appear to have been written in a dialect which is no longer extant. Later a refined and conventional language for poetry was developed. An ancient Tamil grammar called

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the Tolkappiam was written which sets forth the rules for Tamil grammar and refers to previous treatises on the subject. Madura, the Pandyan capital, was the centre of Tamil literary activity and, according to tradition, it was the seat of a *sangham* or academy.

We now come to the Buddhist period when education took on a different course. One main difference between Aryan and Buddhist education was that the latter was not based on Vedic study and its teachers were not of the priestly class. It was open to all and not merely to the three twice-born castes. All castes were equally admissible to the Buddhist community. There were strict regulations for the conduct of the pupil towards the preceptor.

"He should arise betimes. And having taken off his shoes and adjusted his upper robe so as to cover one shoulder, he should give to the *upadhyaya* the teeth-cleaner and water to rinse his mouth with. Then he should prepare a seat for him and offer him rice milk."

Thus he was expected to do all the services that were required to his preceptor. The monastic system which was an important feature of Buddhism provided that every novice, on his admission to the order, should place himself under the supervision and guidance of a preceptor and this pupillage was to last for 10 years.

The most important Buddhist centre of learning was Nalanda which was famous far and wide for its learning. The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsiang, describes this place as follows:

“The priests, to the number of several thousands, are men of the highest ability and talent. Their distinction is very great at the present time, and there are many hundreds whose fame has rapidly spread through distant regions. Their conduct is pure and unblamable. They follow in sincerity the precepts of the moral law. From morning till night they engage in discussion. The old and the young mutually help one another.”

The history of the Buddhist system of education is practically that of the Buddhist order or *sangha*. Buddhist education and learning centred round monasteries. The Buddhist world did not offer any educational opportunities apart from or independently of its monasteries. All education, sacred as well as secular, was in the hands of the monks. They had the monopoly of learning and the leisure to impart it. Thus it happened that the rules of Buddhist education were those of the Buddhist order. Admission to the order was thrown open to all the castes. The candidate for admission must take leave of all the visible marks of the life he has left and the marks of caste as of clothes.

Buddha himself has stated:

"As the great streams, oh disciples, however many they may be—Gāṅga, Yamuna, Achiravati, Sarabhu, Mahi—when they reach the great ocean, lose their old name and their old descent and bear only one name, the great ocean, so also, my disciples, these four castes, Nobles, Brahmins, Vysias and Sudras, when they, in accordance with the law and doctrine which the Perfect One has preached, forsake their home and go into homelessness, lose their old name and old paternity, bear only one designation, ascetics, who follow the son of the Sakya house."

The pupil's duties

The Buddhist system, like the one ordained in Hinduism, enjoins upon the pupil the duty of serving his preceptor as part of education.

"The pupil is to rise early from bed and attend to all the daily necessities of his teacher. Afterwards he is to equip himself for his begging round along with his teacher, if he wishes to accompany him. He is not to interrupt his teacher in speaking, even if he makes a mistake. The pupil is required to sweep clean the *vihara* where his teacher dwells. He is expected to serve his teacher and him alone for he is not to render such service to, or accept it from, anybody else. Lastly, if his teacher is sick, he must nurse him as long as his life lasts and wait until he is recovered."

The teacher, on his part, must give to the pupil under his charge all possible intellectual and spiritual help and guidance by teaching, by putting questions, by exhortation and by instruction. There were also rules for the expulsion of a pupil by his teacher.

As for the qualifications of the teacher, he must be well up in what belongs to any moral practices, self-concentration, wisdom, emancipation and the knowledge and insight thereto. He must be modest, fearful of sinning, strenuous, of ready memory, not guilty of transgression in morals or conduct, not uneducated or foolish, and must be able to train his pupil in the precepts of proper conduct, to educate him in the elements of morality, to instruct him in what pertains to *Dhamma*, *Vinaya*, and so forth. It is interesting to note that the number of pupils a teacher could entertain is given as two novices or as many novices as he is able to administer exhortation and instruction to. The unit of the Buddhist educational system was thus this group of young Bhikkus or monks living under the guardianship of a common teacher who was individually responsible for their health and studies, manners and morals, and their spiritual progress.

Buddhism has virtually passed away from India but has left a considerable influence upon Indian philosophic thought and religious ideas. On the educational side, it is difficult to estimate the amount of its influence. The *Vedas* were replaced by its own sacred books. Medicine and logic seem

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to have been the two subjects in which the Buddhist schools were distinguished if we leave out their influence upon philosophic thought. The Buddhist educational ideals and practice were mainly derived from or closely connected with those of Hinduism. It is not however improbable that in broadening the base of education and offering the possibilities of education to men of all castes, Buddhism has done something to extend among the public of India the desire for some popular education, besides the training of young craftsmen, and to stimulate a demand which led to the growth of popular elementary schools which became so widespread at a later stage.

Education in ancient India is of remote antiquity. Since their first appearance in authentic history, Indians have enjoyed the reputation of being a learned people. Magasthenes, the Greek Ambassador to the Court of Chandragupta, about 300 B.C., found a grave and polished society in which philosophy and science were successfully cultivated and were held in honour. This ancient culture and education became broadbased and reached the populace by the initiative and wisdom of the Buddhist religious orders under the guidance of Buddha who allowed them to be spread among all irrespective of sex and caste.

We now come to the period of Mahommedan education, a period when several changes took place, with the permanent settlement of Moslem rule in India somewhere about the 10th century

A.D. and the establishment of mosques. The mosque, especially in a city, was a centre of instruction and of literary activity. Moslem educational institutions are distinguished as *maktabs* or *madrasahs*. The *maktab* is a primary school attached to a mosque, the chief business of which is to instruct boys in those portions of the Koran which a Moslem is expected to know by heart in order to perform his devotions and other religious functions. Sometimes, instruction in reading, writing and simple arithmetic was also included in the curriculum. The *madrasah*, on the other hand, is a school or college of higher learning. In the case of some of these invaders, the zeal to build mosques and colleges led to the destruction of some temples.

Under the Tughlak dynasty, Moslem education seems to have made considerable progress. For instance, Firuz Tughlak was successful in his attempt to found a new Delhi which is called Firuzabad and this city became famous as a literary centre. He had a special interest in educating young slaves though he carried it to a further extent than any of his predecessors. The Mahommedan historian, Ferishta, says that Firuz built no less than 30 colleges with mosques attached. In the college which he founded at his capital, students and professors lived together in the same institution and stipends and scholarships were given for their support. It is evident that under this sovereign, considerable advance must have been made in the education of Mahommedans. The *madrasahs* and *maktabs* were confined to

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Mahommedans but, by this time, Hindus and Mahommedans had begun to study one another's language. It is stated that the intercourse between Mahommedans and Hindus led to the formation of a new language which came to be called Urdu, generally written in Persian characters and with many words of Arabic and Persian origin.

Akbar was the most brilliant of all the Moghal emperors but it is remarkable that he is generally supposed to have been unable to read or write. Whether this is true or not, it cannot be said that Akbar was an uneducated person. He was deeply interested in the work of spreading education and learning. As the historians have borne testimony, Akbar, in his later life, was very tolerant in religious matters and made arrangements for Hindu youths to be educated at the colleges and *madrasahs* along with the Moslems. His great Finance Minister, Todar Mal, was a Hindu. Todar Mal ordered all official accounts to be written in Persian and this regulation, by compelling many Hindus to study the language, helped the growth and development of Urdu and its acceptance as the *lingua franca* of a great part of India.

If I have ventured to touch upon some aspects of ancient Indian education, it is because no nation can truly progress which is not fully aware of its past and all that the past has contributed towards its greatness. There is a tendency today to speak in terms of modernism and for young men and even women to think of ancient culture and traditions

which existed in the different parts of India, north and south, with a degree of amused tolerance, if not contempt. To such of them, I would commend the exhortation which Max Muller gave in one of his lectures to the candidates who were to go out to India in those days as members of the Indian Civil Service. To the query, "What can India teach us?", Max Muller gave the following reply:

"True, there are many things which India has to learn from us; but there are other things and, in one sense, very important things which we too may learn from India. If I were to look over the whole world to find out the country most richly endowed with all the wealth, power and beauty that nature can bestow—in some parts a very paradise on earth—I should point to India. If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions to some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant—I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we, here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact more truly human, a life not for this life only



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but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India.”

Let our young Indians realise the heritage that is theirs. May the younger generation imbibe the true spirit of India and follow it in all their endeavours.

Would it be a vain dream if we express the hope that the life of the young Hindu or the Buddhist pupil—a life of consecrated service, a life of devotion not merely to the learning that he had to imbibe but to the great tenets which govern the relationship of the teacher and the pupil—this would be possible of achievement in future. To one who looks back over a period of years and realises how in the early part of this century or in the previous century, much of this ideal was still not unfamiliar to the young Indian pupil, it must seem a strange contradiction in terms that today these elementary principles of conduct seem to have been entirely forgotten if not discarded with a vengeance. But let us turn from such sad reflection to the progress of education through the ages.

Reference has been made to ancient or mediaeval centres of learning that existed in India. The great centres of learning like Takshasila and Nalanda attracted scholars from many other countries and may well be said to have resembled the Universities of the Middle Ages in Europe. While some of these Hindu and Buddhist centres of learning in the East and South continued their work throughout the Middle Ages, the Moslem rulers encouraged the

establishment of the *madrasahs* (colleges) at various centres, more particularly in North India and in places like Delhi, Rampur, Lucknow and Allahabad. The medium of instruction was mainly Arabic. The teaching of Persian seems to have been introduced some time during the Moghal rule and Persian scholars became prominent as this language was required by those who sought employment in Government service. Thus it happened that in North India, there were several Hindus who were Persian scholars and poets of repute and enjoyed a reputation in the Moghal courts. But the ancient systems of education were not influenced or affected except that in certain parts, due to the impact of Moslem invasion, some of these seats were adversely affected and had to be closed down.

When the British came into power, the question of imparting education of what may be termed the modern type through schools and colleges was considered. In 1792 when the Commons debated the renewal of the East India Company's charter, Wilberforce, the leader of the evangelical party, sponsored a resolution that, with a view to the advancement of useful knowledge of the inhabitants of British India, the Court of Directors should be commissioned to send out school-masters from time to time. Wilberforce's move was vigorously opposed and one of the Directors is reported to have observed that "they had just lost America from the folly of having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges and it would not do for them to repeat the



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same act of folly in regard to India". A truly prophetic statement which has happily been realised!

The support given by some educated Indians and notably by that distinguished scholar, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, contributed largely to a changed outlook in the administrators of the day. It was at this stage that Macaulay, then the Law Member of the Government of India, wrote his famous minute. The ideas embodied in this famous minute had already been expressed by him in the House of Commons in the following words:

"Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system until it has outgrown that system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come, I know not. Whenever it comes it will be the proudest day in English history. The sceptre may pass away from us. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverses. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. These triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism."

It is worth recalling these words and sentiments when criticism is levelled against those who were responsible for a type of education which is said to have had no nobler objective than the manufacture of clerks to serve the needs of the ruling party.

The Despatch of 1854

This brings us to the famous despatch of Sir Charles Wood to the Court of Directors in 1854 which has been described as "the Magna Charta of English education in India". It set forth a scheme of education which was wider and more comprehensive than anyone which had been suggested so far. It enunciated the aim of education as the diffusion of the arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe. It was emphasised that the study of Indian languages should be encouraged, that the English language should be taught wherever there was a demand for it, and that both the English and Indian languages were to be regarded as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge.

The Court of Directors felt that the time had arrived for the establishment of Universities in India which might encourage a regular and liberal course of education by conferring academic degrees as evidence of attainment in the different branches of arts and science. Thus were created in the year 1857, the three Universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras based on the model of the London

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University with a Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Senate.

The history of the first 25 years of the Universities is mainly one of growth in the number of colleges and students but no new University was established till 1882. At the first entrance examination of the three Universities, 219 candidates were successful. In 1882, 7,429 candidates appeared of whom 2,778 were successful. The total number of colleges in 1857 was 27 while in 1882, there were about 75 colleges. During these 25 years, 8,629 candidates passed the First Arts (Intermediate) examination, 3,284 took the B.A., and 536 the M.A. degree. It will be seen that even at that time, the craving for higher education was evident and the need for opening more colleges and perhaps Universities became apparent. It was under such circumstances that the University of Punjab was started in 1882. The University was to be an affiliating one, but one section of the Act authorised the University to take up teaching work through the appointment of University professors and lecturers.

II

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION

IN 1882, THE Government of India appointed an Education Commission with a view "to enquire into the manner in which effect has been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and to suggest such measures as it may think desirable in order to the further carrying out of the policy therein laid down". It was made clear that the Government of India was firmly convinced of the soundness of that policy and had no wish to depart from the principles upon which it was issued. While assigning a large area of enquiry to the Commission, the Governor-General in Council exempted certain special branches of educational work from its investigation. These branches included the general work of the Indian Universities, technical instruction whether medical, legal or engineering, and the education of Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

The Commission submitted a bulky report wherein recommendations were made touching on several aspects of education, academic and administrative.

The report of the Hunter Commission is a valuable document which not only gave an excellent survey of the position of secondary schools at that time, but made certain fundamental recommendations concerning the types of education to be given at this stage. It anticipated what has come to be recognised later as diversified courses of instruction at the secondary stage of education. In regard to vocational and technical education, the Commission recommended that at the high school, there should be two avenues, one leading to the entrance examination of the University and the other of a more practical character, intended to fit youths for commercial or other vocational non-literary pursuits. They suggested that "when the proposed bifurcation in secondary schools is carried out, the certificate of having passed by the final standard, or if necessary by any lower standard, of either of the proposed alternative courses, be accepted as a sufficient general test of fitness for the public service". One wonders, however, what may have been the future of education in India if these recommendations had been implemented and if diversified courses of instruction suited to the particular aptitudes and talents of the pupils concerned had been instituted and worked with sympathy and understanding. Nearly seventy years later, a similar recommendation has been made by another Commission when much valuable time had been lost and when opportunities had been ignored to improve not only the standards of achievement of the pupils concerned

but also the industrial expansion of the country through trained personnel at the various levels of employment.

The Universities Commission of 1902

The Indian Universities Commission of 1902 was appointed by the Governor-General in Council with the concurrence of the Secretary of State "to inquire into the condition and prospects of the Universities established in British India; to consider and report upon any proposals which have been, or may be, made for improving their constitution and working, and to recommend to the Governor-General in Council such measures as may tend to elevate the standard of University teaching, and to promote the advancement of learning". The opportunity afforded by the report of this Commission was availed of by the Government of India to introduce in the Supreme Council "the Indian Universities Act", more popularly known as the Curzonian Act of 1904. No piece of legislation evoked such a storm of criticism and it was given to one of the greatest of our leaders, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, to enter an emphatic protest against this legislative enactment. Speaking on the bill, Mr. Gokhale said:

"There can be no room for doubt that the first and most obvious effect of the passing of this measure will be to increase enormously the con-

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trol of Government over University matters, and to make the University virtually a department of State. This increase of control is sought to be secured both directly and indirectly—directly by means of the new provisions about the acceptance of endowments and the appointment of University professors and lecturers, the affiliation of colleges and the making of regulations—and indirectly by the proposed reconstruction of the Senate and the power of censorship in regard to its composition.”

He continued:

“My Lord, if Government cannot trust the Senate even to accept endowments without its own previous sanction, or to make appointments to endowed professorships or lectureships, if Government is to have the power to affiliate or disaffiliate any institution against the unanimous opinion of both the Senate and the Syndicate, if it may make any additions it pleases to the regulations submitted by the Senate for its sanction and may even in some cases make the regulations themselves without consulting the Senate, I do not see that much dignity or independence is left to the Senate under such circumstances.”

How prophetic have been these fears!
Are there such instances still possible in our reformed Universities in this era of independence

and self-government? Let us examine the position later in the course of these lectures. But is there any great leader in India who, with justifiable indignation, would rise to his full stature and speak out freely and frankly, without offence but with firmness, as Gopal Krishna Gokhale did facing the serried ranks of officialdom then in the full plenitude of its power and glory!

Elementary Education Bill

On the 18th March 1910, Mr. Gokhale moved in the Imperial Legislative Council a resolution recommending "that a beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a commission of officials and non-officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposals". In spite of the most cogent arguments advanced, there were doubts expressed about the practicability of such a step being taken in view of the enormous difficulties supposed to exist; and "in the end, an assurance being given by the Hon'ble Member in charge that the whole question would be carefully examined by the Government, the resolution was withdrawn". Mr. Gokhale then toured the country and addressed many meetings—not the mammoth meetings of today where the mob gathers in a holiday mood for seeing the *tamasha* but meetings of the intellectuals of the cities—and in impassioned words appealed for support for the Bill that he proposed to in-

introduce in the Imperial Legislative Council. I well remember attending such a meeting in Madras and the profound effect it made on us.

Mr. Gokhale then introduced his Elementary Education Bill on the 11th March 1911. In the course of his eloquent appeal, Mr. Gokhale said:

"My Lord, an American legislator, addressing his countrymen more than half a century ago, once said that if he had the Archangel's trumpet, the blast of which could strike the living of all nations, he would sound it in their ears and say: 'Educate your children, educate all your children, educate every one of your children.'"

Mr. Gokhale asked that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee but, despite the most persuasive arguments that he advanced in support of the measure, there were not wanting doubting Thomases amongst his countrymen, who felt that it was not a practicable proposition. Needless to say that the motion was lost. I well remember the great resentment that was felt amongst the educated classes in India and how the feeling grew that under a foreign rule, even the most desirable and necessary of reforms had little chance of being implemented. Today, looking back over a period of nearly half a century, that resentment would appear to have been not wholly justified in the light of the progress made with the transformation of events in the political field. It is true that our Constitution

which came into force on the 26th January 1950 has, under Part IV, the Directive Principles of State Policy, laid down in Article 45 that "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years." The ten years envisaged in the Constitution are over, but India is no nearer the goal either in free education or in compulsory education and the age of fourteen seems yet a dream. One wonders what the reaction of Mr. Gokhale would have been had he been alive to note the great developments that have taken place in this field since that historic debate of 1911. But then, is there any possibility of another Gokhale being ushered into our political circle to rouse his countrymen to perform their "duty by the children"? The question can be put but will elicit no reply.

We now come to a stage when the Government of India decided to appoint a Commission for holding an enquiry of a comprehensive character into the problem of the Calcutta University. Sir Michael Sadler was the Chairman and a voluminous report was presented in 1919 dealing with many problems of secondary and University education. Although the Commission was intended to suggest changes mainly for the Calcutta University, it would appear that some of the recommendations were applicable to other Universities as well and were adopted by some Universities in the country. In the meantime,

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several new Universities had arisen both in what were then known as Indian States and in British India. With the establishment of the new Universities, it was felt that some agency to co-ordinate their work was needed.

A conference of representatives of Indian Universities was held in 1924 when it was decided to establish an Inter-University Board, the functions of which were to be:

- (a) to act as an inter-University organization and bureau of information;
- (b) to facilitate the exchange of professors;
- (c) to serve as an authorised channel of communication and facilitate the co-ordination of University work;
- (d) to assist Indian Universities to get recognition for their degrees and diplomas in other countries; and
- (e) to appoint a common representative or representatives of India at Imperial or International Conferences on Indian education.

The Board meets annually at different University centres and has been organising Quinquennial Conferences at which some of the controversial issues of higher education are discussed by the representatives. It is significant that the Board has not only representatives of all Indian Universities but that the Ceylon and Rangoon Universities have joined and actively participated in the discussions. After

the partition of India, the Universities which were located in Pakistan seceded, forming a separate Board. One of the important improvements that were effected in 1945 was the constitution of a Standing Committee which is entrusted with the task of considering all urgent issues that may arise during the year. The Standing Committee also prepares the agenda for the meetings of the Board and the annual conferences and generally helps in advising the Universities when called upon to do so.

It must be confessed, however, that the Inter-University Board has not succeeded in making that impress which it was, at one time, expected it would, on University education. The causes are many but it would be futile to discuss them here. Suffice it to say that the Inter-University Board has no statutory recognition and, with the frequent change of Vice-Chancellors which has become so common in these latter days, the continuous and continued experience of trained educationists has not been forthcoming either to consider the deliberations of the Inter-University Board or to give those deliberations the just recognition that they should have in the Universities concerned. In spite of these handicaps, the Inter-University Board has discussed many common problems of University education and has made it possible for those, who wish to be guided by the decisions, to proceed along right lines.

One other all-India body set up to deal with many of the problems connected with education in India

is the Central Advisory Board of Education which meets annually and discusses problems connected with all grades of education. This body was set up as a result of a report more popularly known as the Sargeant Report after Sir John Sargeant, then Educational Adviser to the Government of India. The report itself is a notable document which laid stress on all aspects of education from the elementary to the University grade. The Central Advisory Board of Education is composed of representatives of the Governments of the States and of the Centre, of the legislatures and of varied interests; there are two representatives of the Inter-University Board included in that body. The Board meets every year under the chairmanship of the Minister for Education at the Centre. At the meetings of this Board, problems connected with education are considered in a comprehensive manner from the primary stage to the University stage. Many of the reports of all-India commissions have been considered by this body and valuable recommendations have been made. Although this body is not a statutory body, its influence on State Governments is expected to be of considerable importance.

Yet another body that was created before the era of Independence is the All-India Council for Technical Education. It was in the year 1946 that this body was formed at a conference convened by the Member for Education and representatives of varied interests, viz., the Departments of the Central Government which were represented through

their Secretaries, the industries, labour, principals of technical colleges, representatives of Universities and some of the legislators, had all gathered to thrash out the problems connected with technical education. The deliberations of this conference finally ended in recommendations being made for

- (1) the starting of four regional Higher Technological Institutes;
- (2) greater emphasis to be given to technical education;
- (3) the constitution of an All India Council for Technical Education;
- (4) the formation of a Co-ordinating Committee to review from time to time the progress of technical education; and
- (5) a certain amount of devolution of responsibility through the constitution of Regional Committees, four such Committees having been constituted.

It must be stated that this excellent start has been followed by very material progress in the sphere of technical education; and, if similar measures had been adopted in regard to other types of professional education, it would perhaps be fair to expect that a like progress might have been made. Of the four Higher Technological Institutes contemplated, the first was established at Kharagpur near Calcutta. The starting of the other Higher Technological Institutes was delayed for a considerable

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time and perhaps this was all to the good of such Institutes. And today, we have the three other Institutes started—at Bombay with the help of UNESCO and the Soviet Government; at Madras with the help of the West German Government; and at Kanpur with the help of the Government of the United States of America. Besides these four Higher Technological Institutes, an Engineering College with all modern equipment has been sponsored by the British Government and is located at Delhi.

This brings us to the stage when the greatest and most epoch-making event of the world was ushered in, when on that eventful day, the 15th August 1947, a free and independent India emerged out of centuries of thralldom. It naturally brought a new hope, a new vision, a new future for this sub-continent, the like of which was not possible in the past. The thrill of joy that ran through the heart of every Indian at that time could hardly be expressed in words. And many did express the sentiment:

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.”

With such a glorious vision before us, with such tremendous possibilities open to us and with the certainty that we can by a united endeavour place India in an impregnable position of vantage in the comity of nations, to shine forth as a jewel of outstanding lustre, determined to establish peace ever-

lasting and to see that justice and a fair deal are meted out to all nations, great and small, to all races, black, brown or white, to all peoples whether the so-called civilised or uncivilised—great were the hopes and greater the expectations for the future of our motherland.

Yet, at the very height of our joy, a tragedy too deep for words occurred which will ever be a blot on all concerned. It is not my object to go into the unfortunate events that happened as soon as Partition was made. But I am concerned with the results of those events on the educational progress in our country. Millions of inhabitants had necessarily to leave their home and hearth and seek new surroundings and new habitat. It occurred in both the countries which were involved in this partition. But confining myself to the events in India, it must be stated that this was a great set-back to the orderly progress of educational institutions in many parts of the country. Consequent upon the migration of a large number of youths, the problem of education became one of great complexity. And even today, the deleterious effects on educational institutions in some parts of India have left a permanent mark.

Over-crowded colleges, temporary accommodation, evening classes, insufficient facilities, the sullen spirit of the youth of the country who suffered such great privations, the inadequate number of trained teachers to cope with the situation and many other grave difficulties in the field of education had to be surmounted. It is to the credit of those concerned

that measures were taken as far as possible to meet the situation, unparalleled in the history of the world, consequent on migration of such large numbers. In some parts, however, to this day, the position has not improved to the extent to which one would desire and it is to be hoped that, now that there seems to be a better atmosphere prevalent and a more hopeful outlook in regard to the questions that had arisen after Partition, the hand of friendship and fellowship will be stretched across and that once more, mutual trust and confidence will beget a closer link between the two countries which, only slightly over a decade ago, had more or less common objectives and common methods of development.

Another factor that has created difficulties in the educational sphere has necessarily to be taken note of. The report on the reorganisation of the States in India brought into the educational sphere problems which had not been dreamt of before. It is not my purpose now to express any opinion upon other aspects of the reorganisation of States. Confining myself to the sphere of education, I must state that the problems that have arisen are many and he would be a bold educationist who could say that he can see far enough and resolve them in the light of these developments. Some of us had hoped when the States Reorganization Committee was appointed that such reorganisation would be based on administrative necessities and certain geographical considerations and that the linguistic splitting of the

sub-continent would not be aimed at, nor would it result therefrom. Events have proved otherwise; and today, one cannot be blind to the fact that these linguistic demarcations have introduced a new sort of approach to educational activities.

There is a greater and greater demand for the particular regional language to be stressed and for greater emphasis being given for its being adopted in all stages of education, ultimately as the medium of instruction. And in a consideration of the problems connected with any such change, it is not the educationists who are consulted and who have even any voice but those in authority in the political sphere who decide and dictate what is best for the youth of the country. The adage that the mother tongue is the best medium of instruction may be unexceptionable in the theoretical sphere but, when it comes to practical realities, any one who is deeply conversant with the difficulties facing educational reform in this country and more particularly the problems that will arise from such limitations would realise where this extreme linguistic fervour will lead the country. I shall be content at this stage to touch upon this aspect only. I am firmly convinced that narrow parochialism, whether based on provincial, communal, religious, linguistic, or any other form of limited outlook, will never lead to the blossoming of a nation where each stands for all and all stand for each, where people of all ranks, all castes and all shades of intellectual development will feel, whatever other handicaps they may have,

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they belong to one nation with a glorious heritage and with a future which they may well look forward to with pride and confidence.

One of the first steps taken in the consideration of the future of higher education in India after the attainment of Independence was the appointment of a University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The terms of reference of this Commission were to consider and make recommendations in regard to:

- (1) the aims and objects of University education and research in India;
- (2) the changes considered necessary and desirable in the constitution, control, functions, and jurisdiction of Universities in India;
- (3) the finances of Universities;
- (4) the maintenance of the highest standards of teaching and examination in the Universities and colleges under their control;
- (5) the standards of admission to University courses of study;
- (6) the medium of instruction;
- (7) the qualifications, conditions of service and privileges and functions of teachers; and
- (8) the discipline and welfare of the students.

The Commission toured the country and presented a comprehensive report in August 1949.

It is but natural that in the post-Independence era, with the democratic forces on the ascendant,

there should have been an increased demand for the establishment of more Universities and for centres of higher learning while at the same time, the expansion of primary education should have been equally emphasised. It must however be stated that while the expansion of education at the lower rungs was not commensurate with the needs of the situation nor even with the demand, opportunities for higher education were greater though not proportionate to the needs of the times or to the pressing demands of the educated public. The attention of the Government was forcibly drawn to the need for encouragement of scientific and technological education and for stimulating research in the country.

A number of national laboratories were set up for various specific purposes, the first of these being the National Physical Laboratory at Delhi and the National Chemical Laboratory at Poona. It is true that some of the laboratories were planned even before the independence of the country but the successful completion of several of these projects was largely due to the great impetus that was given by the Government of India and to the personal interest taken by the Prime Minister. We have now over 20 such institutions spread through the length and breadth of the country which afford facilities for the highest form of research to any young scientist interested in such a direction. How far these national laboratories have succeeded in meeting the expectations of the educated public may be

a matter of discussion. It must however be stated that two Reviewing Committees were appointed to report on the working of these national laboratories and their reports, while naturally pointing to certain deficiencies that have to be remedied, were on the whole hopeful of the future of these laboratories. When great advances have been envisaged and a large amount of money has been spent on the buildings and the equipment of such national laboratories, occasionally a certain amount of disappointment in some circles is not unnatural. On the other hand, it must be conceded that the foundations have been well and truly laid for persons of promise, zeal and enthusiasm to follow a career of scientific pursuit without let or hindrance, provided such persons are not unduly distracted by other considerations.

Among the other great changes that have taken place in the field of higher education was the establishment, as has already been stated, of many new Universities and the splitting up of old Universities. From about 27 Universities in the pre-Independence era, we have now nearly 40 Universities and more are likely to be started. Whether the starting of these Universities have been altogether beneficial for higher education or not, we may discuss at a later stage. But it may be mentioned that the State Governments being empowered to pass the necessary legislation for the starting of a University, there has been a great deal of pressure put upon these Governments for more Universities to

be started and in centres where perhaps it was felt by the local population that a University would be the panacea for all ills that the society has to face. The result has been that too many ill-equipped, ill-planned educational institutions have sprung up in some parts of the country. And many of the evils attendant on over-crowding of students, understaffing of teachers, lack of experience and qualified personnel, failure to afford even the minimum amenities for the student population with the inevitable consequence that such institutions came often within the ambit of those who were interested in utilising them for purposes for which they were not intended: these and many other evils have led to a great deal of deterioration in the centres of higher learning.

University Grants Commission

One of the main recommendations made from time to time both by the University Commission and by other educational authorities was that a University Grants Commission should be constituted by the Central Government which would be responsible to ascertain and meet the needs of the Universities. The Government of India constituted a University Grants Commission which was formally inaugurated at New Delhi on the 28th December 1953 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Minister of Education. The functions of the Commission were stated to be:

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- (1) To advise Government on the allocation of grants-in-aid from public funds to Central Universities;
- (2) To advise Government on the allocation of grants-in-aid to other Universities and institutions of higher learning whose case for such grants may be referred to the Commission by the Government; and
- (3) To advise the Universities and other institutions of higher learning in respect of any questions referred by the Government to the Commission.

After nearly three years, the University Grants Commission Act was passed by Parliament in March 1956. Actually the Act came into force after notification by the Government in November 1956 and the University Grants Commission became a statutory body from that time. Under the Act, the functions of the Commission were to inquire into the financial needs of the Universities, to allocate and disburse out of the fund of the Commission, grants to Universities established by or under a Central Act for the maintenance and development of such Universities or for any other general or specified purpose and to allocate and disburse out of the fund of the Commission such grants to other Universities as it may deem necessary for the development of such Universities.

Under the able chairmanship of Dr. C. D. Deshmukh, the University Grants Commission has

contributed a great deal towards improving the conditions under which Universities were functioning and many of the urgent requirements of Universities have been met by the generous grants given by the Government. These grants were both non-recurring and recurring. The grants given to the Universities established under a Central Act were on a 100 per cent basis to cover whatever expenditure had to be incurred by the University concerned for developmental purposes and for the running of the University but in the case of other Universities, the grants were given on a matching basis, one-third or 50 per cent of the grants having to be met by the State Government and/or the University concerned. The grants were also extended to the colleges for certain specified purposes and this has enabled many of the colleges to improve their conditions of affiliation as well as the facilities for the students to live in hostels and for other amenities. Consequent upon the introduction of the 3-year degree course, it was felt that some help should be given to the colleges concerned to meet the demand for more accommodation, laboratories, libraries, etc., and possibly to meet also a certain amount of deficit that was likely to arise and the University Grants Commission has been very considerate in this matter but once again, it was to be on the basis of a matching grant from the State concerned. It need hardly be mentioned that practically all the Universities have no reserves to meet any of these matching grants and therefore they have had to

depend upon State aid if any of the grants of the University Grants Commission were to be accepted.

University Grants Committee of Great Britain

It would in this connection be interesting to study the working of the University Grants Committee of Great Britain to see how far conditions were conducive to help the Universities in the United Kingdom in the discharge of their proper functions and to what extent aid could be vouchsafed to these Universities. The University Grants Committee of Great Britain was established in 1919 within the Treasury and it continues to function as an agency of this Ministry. It has 16 members who, up to 1943, were largely drawn from persons not in active service at a University. This came to mean generally University professors or dons. In 1948, the character of the membership was widened to include active professors or heads of institutions, other educators not teaching at Universities, and business leaders. The influence of the Universities has always been strong on the University Grants Committee and continues to be so. No agency, public or private, could have put the case for the independence of the Universities better.

The British Universities are noteworthy for the relationship that exists between them and the State. Neither the Ministry of Education nor any other Department has any jurisdiction within any of them or control over them. They are entirely autonomous

in their government and their administration. They establish their own courses of study, award their own degrees according to their own regulations, admit what students they consider it right to admit, and appoint all professors and lecturers themselves. The autonomy is all the more remarkable in view of the financial aid which Universities receive from the State. Before 1914, they derived most of their income from endowments, from the fees paid by their students, and in some cases from contributions made from local revenues. Since 1919, and especially since 1945, the amount of financial help given by the State has increased enormously until at the present time, between two-thirds and three-quarters of the annual recurrent expenditure of the Universities comes from the Treasury. In addition, the cost of most of the new University buildings erected has been from State funds.

An outsider might have expected that this increase of assistance from State funds would have been accompanied by some appreciable measure of governmental control over Universities. That at least would have been the reaction of most of our legislators in this country, not to speak of our Ministers of Education in the States. There are three reasons why in the United Kingdom no such thing has happened or seems likely to happen. It is due in the first place to the concept of University freedom which is firmly entrenched in public opinion. In the second place, there is a well established relationship of confidence between the Uni-

versities and the Government. And thirdly, there is a mechanism for the allocation of grants which works with admirable smoothness and efficiency. Grants to the Universities are not made directly by the Treasury to each individual institution but are allocated out of a block sum voted by Parliament and administered by the University Grants Committee.

The Committee consists of persons of high academic distinction and experience who have an intimate knowledge of the problems and needs of the Universities on the one hand and a strong sense of their public responsibility on the other. The University Grants Committee visits each University from time to time and considers carefully prepared estimates of its needs. Every 5 years, the Committee announces what annual allocation it judges each University should have for the ensuing quinquennium and, having made its allocation, it leaves it to the University to expend its grant in the way which seems best to the University. For their part, the Universities are conscious of the obligations which they owe to the community as a whole. The University Grants Committee, in presenting its report for the academic year 1957-58 to the Lord Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, stated that the grant list covered 21 Universities and 3 colleges. Of the 21 Universities, 16 are in England, 1 in Wales and 4 in Scotland. From statistics collected in October 1958, the University student population is about 100,000 and the total

number of full time students is expected to rise to at least 110,000 in 1961-62. The grants paid by the Treasury through the U.G.C. in 1957-58 were recurring grants of over £34 million and non-recurring grants of nearly £12 million, which represent an increase of nearly £6 million recurring and over £2½ million non-recurring over the previous year.

It is also worthy of note that the grants are given for all faculties in the Universities including Technology, Medicine, Dentistry, Agriculture and Veterinary Science. The University Grants Committee has set up advisory committees permanently to offer advice and helpful suggestions and these consist of eminent persons in the related fields. Thus there are advisory committees for Medicine, Agriculture, Education, Science, Social Sciences, Slavonic and East European Studies, Oriental and African Studies, Technology and Veterinary Education.

The University Grants Committee itself is one of the stalwart defenders of University autonomy and academic liberty. It admits that a certain amount of planning must take place in the national interest. But it insists that "the principles of central planning and of academic autonomy are not irreconcilable opposites". Such sentiments have been heartily endorsed in other influential quarters. Thus the *Economist* for example, in commenting on the request of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts of the House of Commons for more exact financial information from the University Grants

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Commission and the Universities, made this characteristic observation:

"Independence is vital to the Universities. Make them answerable to bureaucracy for every penny of governmental grant and originality and creative thought will be endangered. It is far better that the tax-payer should lose one or two million pounds by inefficiency than waste far more through misplaced curiosity."

Such sentiments may be considered rank heresy by some of our leaders in the country who have no doubt that Universities must be kept under constant vigilance.

The University Grants Committee of Great Britain has operated on a quinquennial basis, that is, the Universities make estimates for their normal requirements over a five-year period and these sums are granted, after consultation and agreement, to the Universities. There are certain special grants called ear-marked grants which are given for definite purposes; and so far as these grants are concerned, while it is open to the Universities to participate or not, once having decided to participate, they are committed to spending the ear-marked grants for the definite purposes stated. The non-recurring grants are made on an annual basis and the University Grants Committee will approve a whole project but will not necessarily vote the whole sum requested. It makes an annual grant in

the expectation that a project will be begun within the year stipulated or that further additions will be made within the year.

The University Grants Committee once having approved a capital improvement, in effect licenses it. This means that scarce materials and labour are released without further ado and construction can go ahead. There is one other contact between the University Grants Committee and the Universities and that is visitation. Before a University's quinquennial estimates are approved, the University Grants Committee makes it its business to visit the University and confer with all and sundry. These visits are more than formal appearances and in this way the University Grants Committee does keep in touch with the requirements, plans and hopes of all the Universities and University colleges in its charge.

III

SOME CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

IT HAS BEEN stated already that the University Grants Commission came into existence on a statutory basis towards the fall of 1956. And since coming into full operation under the wise leadership of its Chairman, Dr. Deshmukh, a great deal has been done to improve the conditions in all Universities, to provide with the non-recurring grants for various objects connected with Universities and their associated colleges, and to provide also with recurring grants for an increased number of teachers, equipment, provision of hostels, etc. Yet, the Universities in India are in such a state that the amounts spent by the University Grants Commission will have naturally to be considerably augmented in the next quinquennium, if all that is expected of Universities is to be realised. At the same time, in some fields, there has been a greater and a more rapid advance than in others. Thus, in the technological field, thanks to the establishment of the All-India Council for Technical Education

which now acts as the advisory body to the University Grants Commission, a great deal of support has been given to Engineering and Technological Studies; many new colleges have been opened with the assistance given by the University Grants Commission on the recommendations of this body and post-graduate courses are to be started on a 100 per cent grant basis while the conditions of the teaching personnel are to be improved considerably with the grants given through the University Grants Commission.

It is unfortunate that the other Ministries of the Government of India have not seen it possible to step up the requirements of the associated educational institutions through the Grants Commission. Thus, in particular, the Medical, Agricultural and Veterinary Departments have not so far been in a position to help in any conceivable manner the Universities and the professional colleges concerned to equip themselves to provide for adequate personnel of proved qualifications and to help in the formulation of projects for research. It is hoped that in the next quinquennium at least, these lacunae will be filled and every Ministry will, in co-operation with the University Grants Commission, place necessary funds at the disposal of the University Grants Commission for concerted action.

Reference has been made to the necessity for establishing permanent advisory committees in the various fields. This is as much necessary for the University Grants Commission in India as it has

been found for the U.G.C. in U.K. In fact, one may say it is even more necessary and it is the hope that, as the A.I.C.T.E. is the advisory body in the field of Engineering and Technology, so also in all other studies, the humanities, pure and applied sciences and professional studies like Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, Agriculture, Commerce, etc., there would be constituted advisory committees to help the University Grants Commission in formulating plans on a national level.

It has been stated that the system of matching grants has unfortunately led to certain difficulties in the implementing of many schemes. The States concerned have their own views about the development of Universities. In fact, one of the chief difficulties that the University Grants Commission has experienced in the past was the unilateral decision of States to start new Universities without previous consultation and the fact that such Universities, once they have been started, claim to come under the protective wings of the University Grants Commission. The other chief difficulty in the implementation of the schemes in the Universities is that this matching grant entails the necessity for assistance from the State Governments and consequently the State Governments desire to scrutinise the needs of the Universities and then to judge of the requirements in the light of their own views on the subject. The State Governments themselves are under an obligation to satisfy the legislatures and their Estimates Committees and this leads to a peculiarly

difficult position.

It is yet too early for the country to establish the same conventions as have been established in Great Britain with regard to the University Grants Commission and the parliamentary bodies concerned. In effect at present, the University Grants Commission's report is subject to discussion in Parliament and if, in addition, the University Grants Commission's report is to be subject to discussion in all State legislatures for the simple fact that a small amount of so-called matching grant has to be contributed by the State Government for projects which have been well thought out by the Universities concerned and approved by the Grants Commission, the position of the Universities and the University Grants Commission will be anomalous indeed. It is for this reason that it is strongly suggested that at least from the Third Five-Year Plan, the Grants Commission should make full contribution for such non-recurring and recurring expenditure as it may approve and also for special projects that it may desire the Universities to undertake after full consultation. There can be no doubt that this will lead to a much more satisfactory fulfilment of the objects with which the University Grants Commission was constituted by the Lok Sabha.

In fact, the time is come when in a large measure, University education and more particularly the advanced studies connected with post-graduate and research facilities in the country must be the responsibility of the Central Government through the

University Grants Commission. At the same time, it has to be emphasised that taking into consideration the area which the University Grants Commission has to cover, the number of Universities that it has to look to, nearly 40 as compared with 21 in Great Britain, and the great distances as between the Universities, taking also the number of affiliated colleges in the Universities and the total number of students undergoing University studies, it would be impossible for the University Grants Commission with a central headquarters to be in a position to contact directly most of these institutions and to know exactly the condition of affairs in each of the Universities and in the affiliated colleges. It seems therefore necessary to consider what further steps should be taken for the proper administration of the funds and for exact information to be made available to the University Grants Commission. It seems obvious that under such circumstances, a certain amount of decentralisation is urgently needed.

In this connection, the example of the All-India Council for Technical Education may be taken note of. This Council has established four Regional Committees in the four regions with headquarters at Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay and Madras with the States in each of these regions represented on the Regional Boards. This has resulted, it may be stated from personal experience, in a greater amount of knowledge and more intimate contact with the institutions concerned alike to the benefit of the central organisation and the greater efficiency that can

be promoted in the management of the institutions concerned. It would appear therefore to be a natural process of expansion of the activities of the University Grants Commission to suggest that 4 or 5 such Regional Centres should be established with necessary staff to cover the particular regions concerned to take note of the activities in these regions and to ascertain the needs in a concerted manner so as to evaluate them at the central level. This need would appear to be all the greater if, as is suggested, other faculties in the Universities are also to come under the purview of the University Grants Commission. In fact, the time is long past when the different faculties should come under one organisation so that in a co-ordinated manner the requirements of all the faculties may be made without undue duplication and waste of funds.

One may also refer here to the peculiar position whereby the Universities established by the Central Government get full grants. This has led to a considerable amount of concern in University circles. But if the position is reviewed in the light of no matching grants being asked for, there would be a more reasonable degree of uniformity in the grants given by the University Grants Commission both to Central and State Universities. It is not for a moment suggested that the grants given to Central Universities must in any way be curtailed. But once the annual recurring grant for the efficient working of the Central Universities is decided on, all proposals for the expansion of the activities, whether

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in the Central Universities or the State Universities, should be considered on the basis of national requirements and grants given in accordance with the national needs and the capacity of the Universities to fulfil the requirements.

Autonomy of Universities

We now come to the vexed question which has been raised frequently about the autonomy of Universities. More often than not, when one speaks of the autonomy of the Universities, the expression is either misunderstood or misjudged. Speaking at the Convocation of the University of Madras, so far back as 1937, I ventured to state:

“Such success as the University has been able to achieve is due in no small measure to the general support of Government given to the University and the harmonious relationship that exists between the two. Under the present constitution, the University is virtually an independent body. It should be independent of Government because it must have, if it is to survive, a character and life of its own, deeply rooted in the needs and nature of the people among whom it is planted.”

That this is essential in the interests of academic progress has been accepted by all great educationists of experience. Speaking at the Convocation

of the Bombay University in 1867, the then Governor of Bombay as Chancellor stated: "I have a clear conviction that the political government of this country could hardly commit a greater mistake than by attempting to convert the University into a mere office or department of the State." "I have ever felt most strongly," he continued, "the importance of this truth so well expressed in the address that any loss of dignity or independence in the University involves also a loss of dignity of the highest kind of efficiency." Wiser counsel has never been given.

A University must have also another kind of independence which is at least as essential as the former. Universities are asylums and rallying points of independent thought, the home of the right thinking few against the ignorant many. They preserve the memory of hard-fought fights for truth. In a world where tolerance and forbearance are becoming rare virtues and where freedom of thought is seriously assailed from many directions, the Universities must be the haven of refuge for all devotees of truth who prize it above the ephemeral attractions of temporal gain.

Initiating a symposium on this interesting subject of autonomy of Universities at the Sixth Congress of the Universities of the Commonwealth held at Oxford in 1948, Sir Walter Moberly, then Chairman of the University Grants Committee, stated:

"Universities are powerful and influential corpo-

rations and they perform functions which are of high public importance, so that in no country can the supreme political authority be completely disinterested in the affairs of the Universities. A high degree of autonomy is absolutely necessary if the functions of Universities are to be properly performed, and for the maintenance of this autonomy vigilance is always necessary. Anything which threatens the autonomy of Universities must be resisted whatever form it takes. It may be political interference. All of us have examples of that in our minds. It may be just tidy-minded administration, a passion for standardisation. It may be an uninstructed popular outcry for some quick and tangible returns based on an undervaluing of, and almost a contempt for, the sort of thing which its coarse thumb and finger fail to plumb. It may be only a flattering and crushing demand for services of all kinds. In all these ways, demands may be made upon Universities which are inconsistent with the carrying out of their functions as they understand it and all these demands must be resisted."

These words of wisdom would seem to merit serious consideration not only at the hands of Universities in India but more particularly at the hands of all educated and cultured persons irrespective of political affiliations or political ideologies. If Universities were also susceptible to the varying fortunes of political parties or Ministries that govern the

States for the time being, it would be difficult indeed for Universities to fulfil their functions and to steer clear of evanescent and half-baked ideas nurtured on slogans.

Nothing pleased the delegates who attended the Commonwealth Universities Conference at Oxford more than the assurance given by a Minister of the Labour Government then in power. The Right Hon'ble Herbert Morrison, speaking on behalf of the Government, said:

"In this country, the Government does not control the Universities and I am very glad that it does not. I like the independence of the Universities and I equally like the work of the local educational authorities where, believe me, full democracy obtains. What I like about the University life of the country is the intellectual freedom of it, the lack of official, regimental Governmental control and the atmosphere 'Let us find out the truth, even if it is inconvenient, let us find it out.' That is what a University ought to do."

Similar sentiments were expressed by the Right Hon'ble R.A. Butler on behalf of the Conservative Government at the Commonwealth Universities Conference that was held 5 years later at Cambridge in 1953.

But the most significant contribution was made by Lord Attlee, then Prime Minister of Britain. Speaking during the Quincentenary of the Glasgow

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University on the occasion of the conferment on him of the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws in June 1951, Lord (then Mr.) Attlee, Prime Minister, stated before a large and distinguished gathering of world celebrities:

"It has always been one of our proud boasts that our Universities are free and are rightly jealous of any attempt by the State to extend its power over them. This keen sense of independence has not, however, been found incompatible with a desire for increasing financial assistance from the national revenue. Since the end of the War, the Government of which I am a member, has provided funds on a much greater scale than was ever done by any of its predecessors. Indeed these subventions now constitute a very great part of the revenue of the Universities. Nevertheless the Government has not sought to extend its control. The administration by the University Grants Committee is a characteristic British device which while it passes muster with the financial critics of the House of Commons, leaves the Universities almost complete freedom to run their own affairs."

Continuing, Lord Attlee said:

"That this should be⁺ so must be shocking to totalitarians who believe in State control of thought. In a democracy, it is fundamental that

thought should be free and that the inquiring and critical University spirit should be brought to bear on all affairs. The University must ever seek for the truth; it must never be a mere instrument in the hands of a Government, a church or any political or economic group."

Noble sentiments indeed, but do they apply to the conditions prevalent in this country? Is it only totalitarians who believe in State control of thought or are there persons holding responsible positions in Government or in political circles who feel and think very much on the lines which the Right Hon'ble Lord Attlee condemned so vigorously? Let us examine the situation as it exists at present in our country a little more closely.

When I speak of University autonomy, let there be no mistake that it is a freedom without any checks and balances or that it is a sort of liberty which lends itself to becoming a licence. What is meant is that freedom to work with the full knowledge of its responsibilities to society, to the State and to the world at large, a freedom that should generate a sense of discipline and a sense of duty in everyone associated with the University. I do not hold any brief for Universities which have fallen from that high standard which they ought to maintain. It is unfortunate that it is some of these Universities that have lowered the reputation of all Universities and brought all Universities to a position where a sweeping condemnation is sometimes

made possible. But such errant Universities as are not in a position to come up to the naturally high standards expected of them can be dealt with under existing provisions of the law and there need be no sympathy for any such Universities when they falter and fail in their legitimate duties or standards. And I concede that even in regard to academic freedom, there are limitations which we have to recognise; there are pitfalls in exaggerating the one or ignoring the other. Those who are connected with the Universities feel that we have to steer clear of the scylla of academic subservience and the charybdis of academic intolerance.

At no time was this sound attitude more necessary than at present. While therefore there can be no such thing as University autonomy bereft of those checks and balances so essential for any degree of autonomy to survive, I do feel that the general trend at present is to assume that the Universities are more or less incompetent to perform their task and so to try to direct them in many insidious ways to such activities as seem desirable to particular persons, to Departments of the Government or to particular Ministries.

Let me be a little more frank. This attitude of interference has been very prominent and felt by Universities since the attainment of independence by our country. I have been considerably distressed with the number of communications that have been sent to Universities on diverse topics by Secretaries or Under-Secretaries at the Centre or at the State

level. It may not have been easily realised that a University has got a structure of its own, that there are authorities in the University who have not only definite responsibilities and duties to discharge but are jealous to maintain the freedom to exercise their discretion in the discharge of those duties. Even the best of intentions may be misunderstood if they come as directives or near-directives to Universities and therefore it would be well if, in academic matters, the position of the University and particularly of the Vice-Chancellor is better appreciated by those in political authority.

It is unfortunate that sometimes those in official circles, acting under different Ministries, should consider that the Universities should prune the syllabi and courses of studies just to fit the finished product to enter on the duties which a Government Department may require him to do. When appeals are made therefore, directly or indirectly, to fashion the syllabi and courses of studies, to include particular subjects or if a general condemnation is made of what the Universities are attempting to do by persons in official position, dressed for the time being with authority, acting on their own or perhaps on behalf of the Ministry with which they are connected, an embarrassing situation arises in the University.

Is it possible for a Secretary in an Agricultural Department to determine* what the regulations should be for the candidates preparing for* an academic degree in agriculture? Or for a Secretary

in an Education Department to attend a meeting of an expert body on Engineering Education and to discuss the course of instruction that should be given to persons preparing for a degree in this Faculty? Likewise, in the anxiety to achieve quick results in the many projects which the Government may have launched, when suggestions are made that a knowledge of certain of these projects should be included in the curricula of studies for the undergraduate or post-graduate courses and when definite syllabi are chalked out and sent to all the Universities by some Under-Secretary of a Department, the natural inference that would be drawn is that Universities have got to be groomed in a particular manner.

It is not suggested for a moment that these subjects need not attract the attention of University students. What is submitted is that there are ways and methods by which the Universities may bring such knowledge to the notice of their alumni and give them an opportunity of studying some of these great developments in the manner in which they ought to study as educated people.

This is not the only sort of difficulty that Universities feel in maintaining their academic autonomy. I hold strongly to the belief that the Universities must be receptive to every idea that may emanate from whatever quarters it may be and that, in particular, they should naturally take note of any suggestions that are made in regard to the improvement of educational methods or standards by Ministries

in the State or the Centre. But I am equally certain that if the Universities were to tie themselves to the chariot-wheels of the Departments of the Secretariat through the Ministries concerned, Universities will find themselves in a most difficult and embarrassing position to follow a consistent policy and to ensure satisfactory standards. What the Universities have to do is to take note of international standards, particularly in matters of professional education, and try and see how far they need such modifications as may be necessary and suitable to the conditions of the regions where they are situated.

The reason why Universities should not tie themselves in their academic pursuits to the requirements of the State is because, with changing administrations, with changing policies, with changes in the political chiefs, Universities will find themselves in great difficulties in following a uniform policy. It is for this reason that it is not desirable that political chiefs, who are for the time being in charge of any Departments, should be actively associated with any advisory bodies unless they be themselves experts in the particular type of education that is to be imparted through Universities when their association would be on considerations other than the mere accident of their being Ministers for the nonce. But more than that, it is well recognised the world*over that Universities have a higher aim and their main object is not to prepare finished products which can at once be

utilised by the Departments of State but rather to give such a comprehensive, wide and liberal education that the finished product may, with ease, be utilised to whatever requirements it may need to. A University cannot and should not play the role of a Woolworth chain stores which exhibits for sale cheap and finished articles suited to the needs and capacities of its variegated customers.

Let me refer to another aspect of University control. It has unfortunately happened in recent years that a University here or there has been subjected to directives from the Government even to the extent of revising the standards of examinations and of revising therefore the results of such examinations on the ground that there has been a voluble criticism in the local legislature at the extraordinary number of failures. Is it wise that a State Government should override the decision of a University and grant recognition to colleges which, in the opinion of experts, had not yet come to the standard required for the grant of such recognition? Is it wise again that a Government should interfere with the rules and regulations, should insert new regulations in regard to University conduct and should for ever have a dominant control over what must necessarily be determined by the University? Or again, if a very influential Minister of a State becomes a member of the executive of a University, in fact the Chairman of the Finance Committee of that University, can it be suggested that that University can ever have the

freedom that is needed in academic matters, not to speak of administrative matters?

Many other instances may be cited of such active interference by Governments of States in the affairs of the Universities. Let me make it clear that I am speaking in general on behalf of Universities and not on behalf of any particular University, much less of the University with which I am associated. It is a matter of regret to me that it should be possible for a Minister of a State to summon a meeting of the Principals to discuss various questions, academic and administrative. That is just the sort of thing that is required to make the position of the Vice-Chancellor untenable and no one with any sense of academic duty, with any sense of academic conscience, can possibly continue under such circumstances.

Let me here refer to another trend of interference which some Ministries think they ought to indulge in with reference to Universities. We are all aware of the necessity and the desirability of having as the medium of instruction the mother tongue at all stages of University education. However, if a State were to pass a government order that the medium of instruction shall be the particular language of the State from a particular date and directs the University to concert measures towards this end without any idea of the difficulties that may have to be experienced and without any power to do so in the light of the Acts under which the particular University may be functioning—is it suggested that

such a course of action is intended to give to the University a proper status of its own? Is it to be understood that the University is less responsive than a political chief who has no doubt many high ideals, many patriotic motives, but nonetheless ideals which must necessarily be in accordance with the desires of his political party? If a Government can by such a government order run a coach and pair through the very Acts that have been passed by a legislature, where is the safeguard for a University having even a semblance of University autonomy?

I may be pardoned if I feel strongly on the subject. It would be far better to close the University and ask the political government under these circumstances to take over higher education and run the institutions as their department in the manner they deem suitable. Is it not crystal clear that under such circumstances, with the varying fortunes of the political parties concerned or even of the Ministries concerned, or to go further, of the very Ministers concerned, University education will become a plaything of political forces and will of necessity be thrown to the market-place for cheap experiments and disastrous changes.

Let me touch on another aspect of present-day trends in the country in regard to higher education. When the Roorkee Engineering College was converted into a University by the State legislature, the Inter-University Board took strong exception to this and felt that it was not consistent with the ideals

of a University just to have one single faculty recognised and elevated to the status of a University. Since then, we have Universities with single faculties and we have also a tendency for certain institutions to be recognised as of the status of a University with powers to grant degrees, undergraduate and post-graduate. It may be that in some countries, such a practice obtains but I feel that this trend will lead undoubtedly to a narrow outlook and to the possibility of a lowering of standards which are unfortunately not of the adequate level even at present. It is not in accord with the true concept of a University practically to confine the alumni to a single discipline and to deny them the opportunity and the privilege of mixing with the mass of students in various disciplines—in the humanities, in sciences and in technological subjects.

Let us consider what should be the objective of University education. Cardinal Newman, in his own inimitable way, has tried to give us his idea. "A University," he says, "is a place of concourse, whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge. It is the place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous and error exposed by the collision of mind with mind, and

knowledge with knowledge. It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers. It is a place which wins the admiration of the young by its celebrity, kindles the affections of the middle-aged by its beauty, and rivets the fidelity of the old by its associations. It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an alma mater of the rising generation."

Beautiful as this concept of a University is, true as it must be admitted to be when we take into consideration what our ancient Indian Universities were and stood for, we must realise that today Universities have not always come up to these great expectations and to that extent have not fulfilled their true purpose. Nevertheless, our objective and our ideal should always be to equip ourselves as best we can to make ourselves worthy of the concept of a true University.

Let me refer to another aspect of interference with Universities which is making it increasingly difficult for Universities to fulfil their objectives in the best manner possible. At a meeting of the Inter-University Board held in Colombo, the President, Dr. V. S. Krishna, Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University, referred to this aspect. He said:

"There is another force of which well-wishers of

autonomy in a University have to be mindful and this is constituted by the professional bodies in medicine, engineering, pharmacy, etc. This has gone to such an extent in medicine that today, it is the Indian Medical Council more than any University that is controlling medical education. It lays down the curriculum, the standards of equipment, qualifications of teachers, methods of conducting examinations, appraising of achievement and levels, and leaves very little for the University to do."

I must confess that I feel particularly worried over the tendency of certain all-India bodies to direct and control all aspects of University education in the faculties concerned even to the extent of imagining they are pial schools which are to be brought under control. Although I am a member of the Indian Medical Council since its inception in 1932, I feel greatly grieved that the trends attributed by the Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University are in effect deleterious to all academic progress in the Universities on sound lines.

Not only the Medical Council but the All India Council of Dental Education, the Indian Pharmaceutical Council and other all-India bodies framed on statutory lines have taken it upon themselves that Universities do not know how to manage their business and that the superior wisdom of these Councils should in every detail dictate to the Universities what they should do. When we compare

this with the work and *modus operandi* of similar bodies in the United Kingdom, we see the vast difference. These Councils are expected to give general advice to the Universities and leave it to the Universities within broad limits to organise education on a sound basis. It is unfortunate that when these laws were framed by the Parliament, those who were responsible for these professional studies did not consult the Universities and hence they gave power, far in excess of what ought to have been conferred, to such all-India bodies. The danger of either a dead level of uniformity or, what is worse, of a changing pattern from year to year depending upon the whims and fancies of the particular persons concerned with the inspection of these bodies will ruin the future of all professional education.

I do not want the impression to be created that the Universities are anxious to have freedom to lower the standards or to be content with an inferior sort of training to be given to the students. The complaint is rather that the specific recommendations vary from University to University depending upon the factor of the persons concerned and that therefore Universities are constantly subject to the possibilities of unnecessary changes without any positive result.

Yet another unfortunate trend that has been noted in recent years is the tendency for education to be commercialised. It is a most unfortunate trend and it will ruin all true progress in education, that

colleges should be started with so-called voluntary donations given by students, that professional education should be made available to the rich on such lines, that seats should be reserved even in advance for a period of five or more years on payment of such fees, that other evils too numerous to mention here should have crept in thereby. These are factors which no educationist can view without the deepest regret. Yet when some Governments themselves prefer to encourage or to tolerate such trends, the future of higher education in this country seems to be very much in jeopardy.

It is not my intention to speak only of the seamy side of things in the many problems which face educationists in all types of education. Whatever may be the decisions of all-India bodies like the Inter-University Board, the Central Advisory Board of Education, etc., each individual Ministry in the State Government is in a position to accept or discard any of these recommendations, and today, therefore, a great confusion has resulted in the sphere of education. The problems that await solution at the hands of the Universities are manifold but the most important aspect of University life and education is the training for good citizenship among its alumni. Today several forces are at work which are hardly likely to help Universities in attaining this objective. It is unfortunate that students should be drawn into different political parties, that not infrequently students' organisations should be labelled after the political parties to which they

belong. Many of those who decry this tendency for political affiliations among students' organisations however are keen to criticise other political parties except their own. It is not till the leaders and the prominent public men realise how very essential it is that students should be allowed to function in their organisations without any political labels at that stage, that there can be a wholesome development of student activities.

It is not suggested that students should not hold certain views or discuss subjects of importance to the country or should not have preference to certain political parties but the active participation of leaders of political parties in student organisations cannot but lead to a state of affairs, where unfortunately differences will result in a great deal of estrangement between groups of students and produce a state of indiscipline in the University such as exists in some parts of the country. The young men whom we are ushering out of University tutelage have problems to solve—problems of a far more serious nature than the students of a generation ago had to face. It is true that fortunately they are ushered into life at a time when the country is independent and everyone of them can hold his or her head high as citizen of a free and independent democratic country. This was of course not the case for students a couple of decades ago.

But let it be confessed that the problems that face the students today are not any less difficult or urgent than those that faced their predecessors.

National problems there are, of a very urgent nature. The many difficulties that have unfortunately arisen in the country, the clashes that have taken place on account of differences, linguistic, communal, territorial, or other causes, the sharp cleavage of opinion that is now being expressed between different political parties in the same country, the personal element that has unfortunately crept into party politics: these and several other national problems have accentuated the necessity for the student to study them calmly and dispassionately and arrive at right conclusions. And in the light of the grave international problems, it would be the policy of prudence and wisdom to try and secure the maximum amount of agreement and co-operation at the national level.

There has for some time been criticism that the standards of University education have been lowered and that the products of the Universities today are not like the products of a previous generation. Such an impression has gained greater publicity by the remarks made by the Union Public Service Commission and by other State Public Service Commissions recently, bemoaning the lowering of standards and the consequent failure on the part of those who sat for competitive examinations to acquit themselves as befits products of a University education. I am not going to controvert such a statement, for I am myself aware that, unfortunately, in spite of every attempt, there has been a definite lowering of standards in regard to Univer-

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sity education and the products turned out of Universities.

Let me make it clear that this does not mean that there have not been here and there bright exceptions to the rule and it would be as unfair as it would be illogical to suggest that there has been something radically wrong with our young men or that they are not capable of absorbing and profiting by University courses of studies. While I therefore do not wish to take exception to such statements, coming as they do from such august quarters, may I not however put forward the plea that some of those who bemoan the lowering of standards of University products have neither the opportunity nor probably the time to study and know why this setback has taken place. Is it because the present generation is intellectually less efficient than its predecessors? Can there be a general lowering of the level of intelligence of a whole generation of people in this or any other country?

A little closer examination of this question will probably not be quite fruitless. It has been my endeavour for several years to try and understand why this general lowering of standards had taken place. Are we so sure that the fault is only with the young aspirants to University education? There are not wanting those who bemoan the fact that a large number of young men are seeking admission to Universities who are not likely to benefit by University education. Let us face squarely and not indulge in self-delusion.

What are the factors that contribute to proper training and achievement in a University course of study? And are such factors present everywhere? Is it not a fact that today every college is overcrowded; that a college where a few hundreds were being taught has today as many thousands? Is it not a fact that everywhere, the numbers admitted to certain branches of study are so many that there are few, if any, chances for personal contact between the teachers and the students? What would you think of students studying for a Bachelor's degree in science being trained in 12 and 14 batches in their practical work and having but two hours a week to do practical work in science subjects? What would you consider of a large number of students, numbering some 400 to 500, being admitted to an Engineering College where there are not facilities for even a hundred to be properly trained? What would you consider about the possibility of training in a Medical College where, instead of a hundred, thrice and four times that number are admitted and go through a training as incomplete as it is superficial?

Let me take another aspect of the question. Are the public not aware that today, the teaching profession does not draw the type of scholar that used to be attracted to this profession in an earlier generation? Are we not aware that today, most of the colleges are manned by junior members who have not had the experience and who certainly have not got the leisure to make themselves thorough

with the subjects and who cannot by any means therefore command that amount of attention from students which they must of necessity have if they are to prove themselves worthy teachers? Is it not a fact that in many of the colleges, persons within a few years after passing find themselves as heads of departments?

Is it not also a fact that many a teacher finds it necessary to leave his profession and seek a more lucrative appointment? How can a profession, which is recruited on conditions where it is impossible for a teacher to make both ends meet, find itself in a position to continue to give of its best and to attract to that profession those who are most competent to join it? The truth of it is—there exists today a chaotic sort of conditions in most colleges and Universities. The public knows it; the authorities are aware of it; and they should know also, if they devote some thought to it, that such a state of things cannot promote that true education that we all have at heart.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must now bring my somewhat desultory remarks to a close. I have availed myself of the privilege you have given me, of thinking aloud and commenting upon some of the grave problems that face educationists and more particularly the Universities. No one is more acutely aware than myself of the great need for improving all aspects of academic life in the Universities and to see that Universities once more play the role that they had played formerly as befits their academic

outlook and their moral responsibility.

The world is too much out of joint and today forces are being let loose which are enveloping the whole globe and trying to stifle academic thought and independence. The materialistic ideals of life are displayed so prominently that they serve to dazzle young minds and today most people seem lost between the struggle for survival on the one hand and the hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt on the other. The world requires today men of the type that Charles Kingsley has described so eloquently:

"Good men, honest men, accurate men, righteous men, patient men, self-restraining men, fair men, modest men, men who are aware of their vast ignorance compared with the vast amount that there is to be learnt in such a Universe as this; men who are accustomed to look at both sides of a question; who, instead of making up their minds in haste like bigots and fanatics, wait like wise men for more facts and more thought about the facts."

May we be inspired by the thoughts of great men to dedicate ourselves to the service of mankind and may we, as torch-bearers of true culture and wisdom, the result of University training, raise aloft those eternal verities of life which alone, if followed, will lead life to sovereign power.

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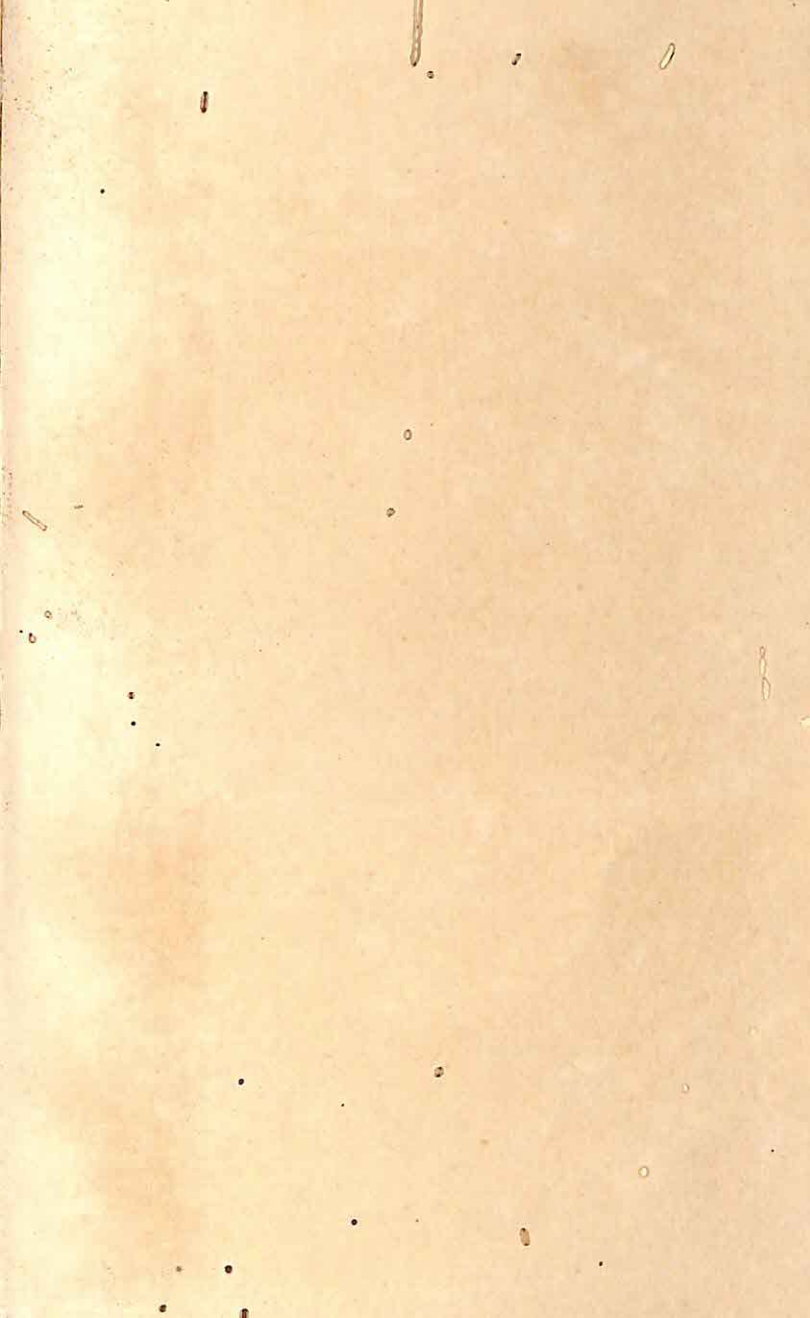
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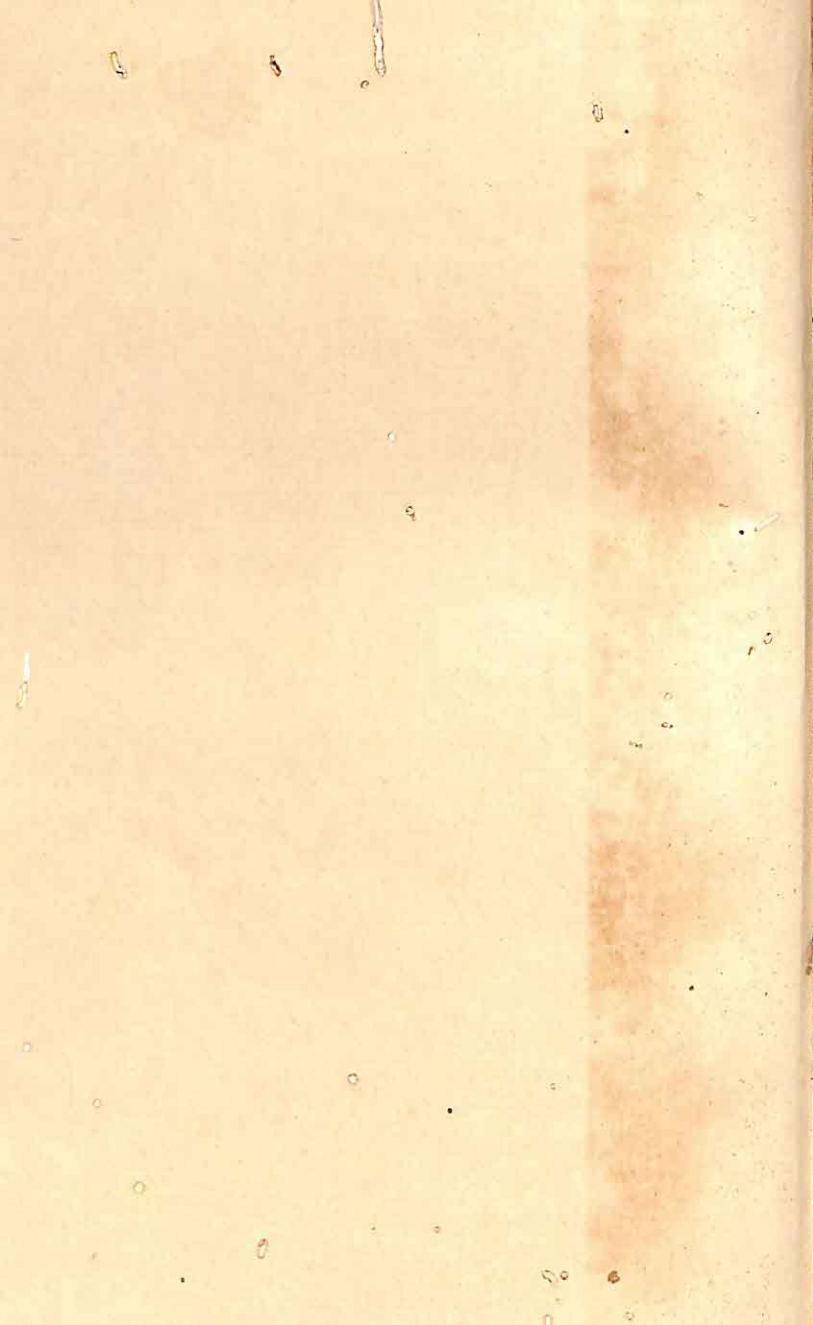
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